

INSIDE AURORA: Palette Peril

By Scott Johnston

"I have a complaint about the inclusivity of a recent Town event..."

The Mayor sighed inwardly. These were the sorts of comments he liked least about the Open Forum portion of Council meetings.

"...because there were certain areas that were not represented."

Knowing he had a positive response, the Mayor smiled and quickly waded in. "I assure you ma'am, that Council has committed for Town staff to look into future Multicultural Festivals to..."

"No, not that event," interjected the speaker. "The Colours of Fall."

"But that was a well-attended and popular evening for Aurorans of all ages and backgrounds," he replied, a bit perplexed. "And I know staff worked hard to make it an enjoyable event for everyone. What was missing?"

"Crimson."

"I'm sorry?" The Mayor leaned forward slightly. "Did you say 'crimson'...like the colour?"

"Exactly. There were many shades of red, but not crimson. It's definitely a Fall colour, but where was it?"

Answering her own question, she continued, "Nowhere, that's where."

"It wasn't in the posters advertising the event. It wasn't in the decorations that night. It wasn't in the outfits worn by the band. How can an event be deemed as representing the colours of Fall, when one colour was obviously purposely overlooked?"

"But I..." started the Mayor.

"Not just crimson. I expected to see vermillion," said a man, getting to his feet a few rows back.

"Here, here," came a voice from the side.

"Yellow, red, orange... sure there were lots of colours, but why not be inclusive? Was there some sort of hidden agenda?"

"It wasn't just the shades of red that were missing. I really like amber, but didn't see it, anywhere," said a man seated near the front, before the mayor could comment. "Shouldn't you have consulted with residents ahead of time before raising false expectations with a so called 'Colours of Fall' event that only featured specific colours?" he concluded.

"That's the point I was trying to raise," said the first speaker. "There was obviously some bias involved in the choice of palette."

"I can't imagine that..."

"Mr. Mayor," interjected one of the Councillors, leaning forward and speaking clearly into their microphone. "I distinctly remember suggesting early on in the planning process that vermillion be included in the poster."

Before he could respond to this, another voice with a faint burr came from the audience. "And what about plaid?"

"Really, sir, I'm not certain that plaid is even a colour..."

"Another slight!?"

"Boo."

"Betrayal."

"Okay then," said the Mayor, in an effort to get past this and move on, before it spiraled completely out of control.

Focusing his gaze on an unfortunate staff member, he asked, "Can your team please develop a report explaining the process for colour choice in the Colours of Fall concert, and indeed in all Town events, as well as any recommendations?"

"Council will review it," he said, addressing the Chamber at large, "and we'll ensure no perception of spectrum bias in future."

The audience members who had raised the issue sat down, apparently satisfied for now.

Closing Open Forum, the Mayor just hoped this would resolve the issue. As for the Report, with luck it wouldn't include a recommendation of an apology. He wasn't sure exactly what he would say.

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